

MOD, constabularies police local areas

By Linda Laws
Community relations advisor

Community policing is provided by the Ministry of Defence Police and the county constabularies of Suffolk, Norfolk and Cambridgeshire, depending on where you live in the community. The commanders from the Ministry of Defence Police and Suffolk Constabulary describe the roles of their units.

Suffolk Constabulary

Inspector Douglas Paxton

The Suffolk Constabulary consists of about 1,200 police officers and 600 civilian support staff. We police a county which has a total population of 656,000 people. Suffolk is thankfully one of the safest places in England and Wales and enjoys some of the lowest crime rates anywhere in the country. Nevertheless, the police are kept busy ensuring our communities continue to enjoy this level of tranquillity.

As a service man or woman, or a family member of service personnel at RAF Lakenheath, you are within the Brandon policing sector and I am the commander of the Brandon Police Station. I have thirteen patrol constables, two sergeants and two detectives who provide the policing service 24 hours a day across the sector. In addition, there is one full-time civilian member of our staff who deals with members of the public who call at the police station to make inquiries or seek assistance. The station is open 10 a.m.-noon and 2-4 p.m. Monday to Friday, but do remember that police officers are always on patrol and you should never hesitate to contact us for assistance. If you do not live on the base you will get the quickest police response by dialing 999 and asking for our help. For less urgent matters we will be pleased to hear from you on our normal phone which is (01842) 810211.

As a sector commander, one of my prime responsibilities is to implement the Suffolk Policing Plan. This involves the sector achieving a number of set targets, which includes a mixture of crime reduction and crime detection targets. The priority in Brandon and Lakenheath at present is to reduce the number of house burglaries and to detect more thefts from motor vehicles. I firmly believe that the community, and neighbourhood watch groups in particular, will play an essential role in reaching these objectives. Neighbourhood watch simply involves people agreeing to not only protect their own homes but to take an interest in helping other people in the street. This could mean checking on a neighbour's house when they are away or being vigilant for any suspicious activity.

I would invite you to remember that the



Photo by SrA. Grace Hunt

Inspector Douglas Paxton, left, and Sgt. Peter McDonald

police alone cannot win the fight against crime. We do enjoy a great deal of support from the Ministry of Defence Police and senior U.S. Air Force officers. However, there is much that individual servicemen and women can do to make our job easier. It is important that you take care of your property, always lock your car and never leave valuable items where they can be seen. Join a neighbourhood watch scheme if one is available. Police Constable Liam Garrard will be pleased to speak with you about Neighbourhood Watch. He can be contacted at the Brandon Police Station.

Ministry of Defence Police

Sgt. Peter McDonald

The men and women who make up the Ministry of Defence Police are civilian police officers. The force is organised and accountable in the same way as any other police force in the U.K. The MDP has its statutory authority granted in the Ministry of Defence Police Act 1987.

The duty of the MDP is to provide or contribute to the physical protection of personnel and property within its jurisdiction and to provide an effective police service to the Ministry of Defence as a whole.

The MDP are here to serve the defence community. They work closely with other agencies to ensure that the MOD community is secure and safe. However, they cannot work in isolation and, in common with every police force in the land, they need the support of their public.

Be it a police presence at public military events or as a community liaison officer offering guidance to parents during a workshop, both show the MDP commitment to reassuring you, the public. The MDP also give presentations to wives' clubs on personal safety, safety of children and home safety.

MDP crime prevention officers and CLOs carry out crime prevention surveys. Domes-

tic violence presentations and numerous other crime prevention initiatives are run throughout the UK by these specialists of-ficers, i.e. neighbourhood watch, boat watch and art watch but to name a few.

The MDP has the largest marine fleet of any UK police force, and is stationed round the UK coastline at strategic locations. The criminal investigation division is multi-skilled and offers a comprehensive investigative capability. As a force it operates over 400 licensed police, security and specialist dogs with more dog handlers than any other force in the British police service.

The MDP offer the full range of British policing services to the U.S. Air Force and its public at RAF Lakenheath, as well as both RAF Mildenhall and RAF Feltwell. Their duties are many and varied and each officer prides him or herself on providing a truly professional police service. The MDP work extremely closely alongside the County Forces in which the aforementioned bases are located, particularly their Suffolk Constabulary colleagues at Brandon, with whom an excellent relationship has been forged. In a like manner, the force works in unison with both the 48th Security Forces Squadron and the 100th SFS.

The Ministry of Defence Police is here to serve you, its community. Call (01638) 523874 for assistance.



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